

# NITA KUMAR

Present Position (2005 onwards)

**Brown Family Professor of South Asian History**

Department of History  
Claremont McKenna College  
Claremont CA 91711

(909) 607 0490  
[nkumar@cmc.edu](mailto:nkumar@cmc.edu)

Honorary Position (2003 onwards)

**Director**

NIRMAN  
N 1/70 Nagwa  
Varanasi 221005

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## Education

University of Chicago	1984	Ph.D.
Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi	1978	M.Phil.
University of Bridgeport, CT	1974	M.A.
Patrice Lumumba University, Moscow	1972	Certificate
University of London	1971	“A” Levels
University of Lucknow, U.P.	1970	B.A.

## Professional History

University of Michigan	2002-2005	Visiting Professor, History Dept
Reed College	2001-2002	Visiting Professor, History Dept
Centre for Postcolonial Education, NIRMAN, Varanasi	October 2001 on January 2003 on	Professor Honorary Director
Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta	1990-2001	Fellow (Permanent) [equivalent to Associate Professor with tenure]
Brandeis University	2000-2001	Madeleine Haas Russell Professor in non-Western and Comparative Studies
Yale University	1998-1999	Fulbright Fellow, Anthropology Visiting Professor, History
Brown University	Jan 1987-Dec 1989	Mellon Fellow, History Dept
University of Chicago	1983-1985	Lecturer, MA Program in the Social Sciences
University of Delhi	1975-1978	Lecturer, History

## Books

- Forthcoming **Educating the Child in India: The Family and the School**  
Forthcoming **Women, Gender and History in South Asia**. NY: Routledge  
Forthcoming. Edited with Usha Sanyal. **The Politics and Culture of Food: South Asian Women and their Agency**  
2007 **The Politics of Gender, Community, and Modernity: Essays on Education**. Delhi: Oxford University Press  
2001. Edited. **Exploring Indian Precolonial and Colonial Intellectual History**. Delhi: Sage. Special issue of **Indian Economic and Social History Review** 38, 1  
2000. **Lessons from Schools: A History of Education in Banaras**. Delhi and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage  
2000 Translated, with an afterword. **Mai: a novel by Geetanjali Shree**. Delhi: Kali for Women  
1994. Edited. **Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories**. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia  
1992. **Friends, Brothers and Informants: Fieldwork Memoirs of Banaras**. Berkeley: University of California Press  
1988. **The Artisans of Banaras: Popular Culture and Identity, 1880-1986**. Princeton: Princeton University Press

## Film & Drama

- Forthcoming **Shankar's Fairies**, produced and scripted [A film set in 1962 about a servant, Shankar, from a village near Lucknow, in an officer family, and his relationship with their little children, based on the stories he tells.]  
1983 "The Silk Industry of Banaras". Script and commentary for a film produced by Doordarshan, National Indian Television, Delhi  
2015 "The Empire Strikes Back." Play awarded and performed at Pomona College  
2014 "Vayu: the Domestic Tale of a Vedic God." Play awarded and performed at Pomona College

## Articles and Chapters (refereed)

- 2018 forthcoming "Education and Hinduism," in the **Oxford Bibliographies Online**  
2018 forthcoming "Children and Hinduism," in the **Oxford Bibliographies Online**  
2018 "The Curriculum, and the Hidden Curriculum, in Indian Education, 1985 to the Present," in Helen Ullrich, ed. **Impact of Education in S. Asia from Sri Lanka to Nepal**. Palgrave Macmillan.  
2017 "Education in the Indian Subcontinent," in **The Encyclopaedia of Islam**, Leiden: Brill  
2016 "The Weavers of Banaras," in **Economic and Political Weekly**, 51, 53, 31 Dec.  
2015 "Friendship in Contemporary India," in Carla Roesseeuw, ed. **Friendship**. New York: Berghahn Books.  
2014 "Education and the construction of the subaltern," in Ashok Pankaj and Ajit Pandey, eds., **Subalternity, Exclusion and Social Change in India**. Cambridge

- 2014 "Academic Pilgrimages," in Istvan Keul, ed., **Banaras Revisited: Scholarly Pilgrimages to the City of Light**. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag
- 2012 "India's Trials with Citizenship, Modernisation and Nationhood," in Laurence Brockliss and Nicola Sheldon, ed., **Mass Education and the Limits of State Building, 1870-1930**. Palgrave Macmillan
- 2011 "The Middle-Class Child: Ruminations on Failure," in Amita Baviskar and Raka Ray, eds. **Elite and Everyman: the Cultural Politics of the Indian Middle Classes**. Delhi: Routledge
- 2010 "The Ramlila Project: Indian Identities in an Age of Globalization." In William Ascher and John Heffron, ed. **Change and Persistence in a Globalizing Society: The Case of Asia and the Pacific**.
- 2009 "A Postcolonial School in a Modern World." In Derek Mulenga, ed. **Postcolonialism and Education: Challenging Traditions and Disrupting Boundaries**.
- 2008 "Leadership in a Flat World: the Past, Present and Future of India" **Leadership Review**, Online Journal of Kravis Leadership Institute, Claremont McKenna College
- 2008 "Dhanvanti Rama Rau" and "Manikuntala Sen" in **Oxford Encyclopaedia of Women in World History**. New York: Oxford University Press
- 2008 "The Space of the Child." In Martin Gaenzle and Jorg Gengnagel, ed. **Visualizing Space in Banaras: Images, Maps, and the Practice of Representation**. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Published in 2005 by Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. Pp 255-278
- 2007 "Gender in the Madrasas." In Jamal Malik, ed. **Madrasas in South Asia: Teaching Terror?** New York: Routledge
- 2007 "Age and Control: The Nation, the Neighbourhood and the Home." In Karen Malone, ed. **Child Space: An Anthropological Exploration of Young People's use of Space**. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- 2006 "The [no] Work and [no] Leisure World of Women in Assi, Banaras" in Lina Fruzzetti and Sirpa Tenhunen, eds. **Culture, Power and Agency: Gender in Indian Ethnography** Calcutta: Stri Publications. Pp 52-89
- 2006 The Scholar and her Servants: Towards a Postcolonial Anthropology". **India Review** vol 5 nos. 3-4, July-October, pp 519-550
- 2006 "Provincialism in Modern India: the Multiple Narratives of Education and their Pain". **Modern Asian Studies** May
- 2005 "Mothers and Non-Mothers: Gendering the Discourse of Education in India". **Gender and History** vol 17, no 1, April, pp 154-182
- 2004 "Do Real Men Cry? Love, Gender and Seasonality in Songs from India," in Naval Krishna and Manu Krishna, ed., **The Ananda-Vana of Indian Art: Dr Anand Krishna Felicitation Volume** Varanasi: Indica Press. Pp 595-606
- 2004 "Women and Family in South Asia" in **Encyclopaedia of Islam and Women**
- 2002 "Why do Hindus and Muslims fight? Children and History" in Sarah Lamb and Diana Mines, ed. **Everyday Life in South Asia**. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Pp 337-356
- 2001 "Children and the Partition: History for Citizenship" in Suvir Kaul, ed. **The Partitions of Memory**. Delhi: Permanent Black. Pp 269-301
2001. "Learning Modernity? The Technologies of Education in India" in Rene Collingnon and Mamadou Diouf, eds., **Les Jeunes: Hantise de l'espace public dans les societes du Sud?** Special issue, **Autrepart** no. 18, pp 85-100
- 2001 "Languages, Families and the Plural Learning of the Nineteenth-century Intelligentsia" in N. Kumar, ed., **Explorations in the Intellectual History of**

- Colonial and Precolonial India.** Special issue of **Indian Economic and Social History Review** vol 38, no 1, pp 81-103
1998. "Why Does Nationalist Education Fail?" in S. Bhattacharya, ed., **The Contested Terrain: Perspectives on Education in India**. Delhi: Orient Longman. Pp 83-98
1997. "The Modernization of Sanskrit Education in Banaras" in W. Radice, ed., **Swami Vivekanand and the Modernization of Hinduism**. Delhi: Oxford University Press
1996. "Religion and Ritual in Indian Schools: Banaras from the 1880s to the 1940s" in Nigel Crook, ed., **The Transmission of Knowledge in South Asia**. Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press. Pp 135-154
1994. "Class and Gender Politics in the *Ramlila*" in William Sax, ed., **The Play of the Gods**. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp 156-176
1992. "Class and Gender Politics in the Ramlila" **Indian Economic and Social History Review** vol XXIX no 1, January-March, pp 37-56
1991. "Changing Education and the Stubborn Work Concept in the Banaras Silk Industry, 1880s to the 1930s". **Purusartha 14** Special Issue **The Context of Work in India**, edited by Gerard Heuze. Pp 315-338
1991. "Widows, Education and Social Change". **Economic and Political Weekly**
1991. "Urban Culture in India: the World of the Lower Classes" in Indu Banga, ed., **The City in Indian History**. Delhi: Manohar
1990. "The 'Truth' about Muslims in Banaras: an Exploration in Social Curricula and Popular Lore". **Social Analysis** Special Issue, **Person, Myth and Society in South Asian Islam**, edited by Pnina Werbner, no 28, July, pp 82-96
1989. "Work and Leisure in the Formation of Identity: Muslim Weavers in a Hindu City" in Sandria Freitag, ed., **Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance, and Environment, 1800-1980**. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp 147-170
1989. "Labour, Capital, and the Congress: the Delhi Cloth Mills, 1928-38". **IESHR**
1987. "The Mazars of Banaras: a New Perspective on the City's Sacred Geography". **The National Geographical Journal of India** 33, no 3, September, pp 263-276
1986. "Open Space and Free Time: Pleasure for the People of Banaras". **Contributions to Indian Sociology**

#### Articles and Chapters (non-refereed)

2016. "The technology and Politics of teaching English," in Sanjay Kumar, ed., **Social Diversity, Inclusive Classrooms and Primary education in India**.
2014. "Inclusive and Postcolonial Education." **Learning Curve**, Bangalore
2013. "An Inclusive Education for All," in Rajesh K. Jha, ed. **Yojana**. Delhi: Yojana Bhawan.
2012. "Need for Excellence, not Literacy," **Seminar** 638. October
2012. "How to understand 'Bicultural Education' and 'Transnational Interactions' in Education," in Arthur Rosenbaum, ed. **Yenching University**. Chicago: Imprint Pubs. 2012
2004. "Children in South Asia: in **Encyclopaedia of Children and Childhood**
2003. "Calcutta" in **Encyclopaedia of Urbanism and Urban Cultures**
2003. "Consumption and Lifestyle" in **The Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology**, ed, Veena Das. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp 675-694
2003. "The Ganga at Banaras" in Amita Bavaskar, ed. **Waterlines: the Penguin Anthology of River Writings**. Penguin

- 2003 "A Postcolonial Site in a Modern World". **Economic and Political Weekly** July 19, pp 3049-3055
- 2003 "History in the Madrasas". **Seminar** 522, February. Pp57-62
- 1993 "Patronage, Identity and Culture Change" in Rana Singh, ed., **Banaras: Cosmic Order, Sacred City, Hindu Traditions**. Varanasi: Tara Book Agency, pp 225-233
1986. "Patronage, Identity and Culture Change: Five Melas of Banaras" in T.K.Verma, ed., **Varanasi Through the Ages**. Varanasi: Bharatiya Itihas Sankalan Samiti

#### **Reviews and Miscellaneous (selected)**

- 2018 Madhuri Desai, **Banaras Reconstructed: Architecture and Sacred Space in a Hindu Holy City**. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2017. **Journal of S. Asian History and Culture**
- 2015 Faisal Devji, **The Impossible Indian: Gandhi and the Temptation of Violence**. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. 2012. **Indian Economic & Social History Review**
- 2014 Sanjay Seth, **Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India**. **Social History**
- 2013 Anjan Ghosh, Tapati Guha-Thakurta & Janaki Nair, eds., **Theorizing the Past: Essays for Partha Chatterjee**, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011, in **Indian Economic and Social History Review**. 2013
- 2013 Assa Doron, **Life on the Ganga: Boatmen and the Ritual Economy of Banaras**. **The Book Review**
- 2012 Parna Sengupta, **Pedagogy for Religion: Missionary Education and the Fashioning of Hindus and Muslims in Bengal**. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2011. **American Historical Review**.
- 2011 Nandini Chatterjee, **The Making of Indian Secularism: Empire, Law and Christianity, 1830-1960**. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- 2010 Michael Dodson, **Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture, India 1770-1880**
- 2009 Veronique Benei, **Schooling Passions: Nation, History, and Language in Contemporary Western India**. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press
- 2006 Review of Tithi Bhattacharya, **Sentinels of Culture**. **American Historical Review**
- 2003 Review of Michael Katten, **Colonial Lists/Indian Power: Identity Formation in 19<sup>th</sup> c. Telugu-Speaking India**. **American Historical Review**.
- 2002 Review of Bradley R. Hertel and Cynthia Ann Humes, eds., **Living Banaras: Hindu Religion in Cultural Context**. **Indian Economic and Social History Review (IESHR)**
- 2001 Review of Catherine Weinberger-Thomas, **Ashes of Immortality, History of Religions** 41-2
- 2001 Review of Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir, **The Great Indian Education Debate**. **Man**
- 2001 Review of R.S.Khare, **Cultural Diversity and Social Discontent**. **The Journal of Asian Studies (JAS)**
- 1999 Review of Jamal Malik, **The Colonization of Islamic Education**. **IESHR**
- 1999 Review of Sumit Guha and Michael Anderson, **Changing Concepts of Rights and Justice in S Asia**. **IESHR**
- 1998 Review of Warwick and Reimers, **Hope or Despair? Learning in Pakistan's Primary Schools** and Jeffery and Basu. **Girls' Schooling: Women's Autonomy and Fertility Change in S Asia**. **JAS**
- 1998 Review of Vasudha Dalmia, **The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions**. **IESHR**
- 1997 Review of Joseph Alter, **The Wrestler's Body**. **Man**

- 1996 Review of Pietrse and Parikh, ed., **The Decolonization of the Imagination**. **The European Journal of Development Research**
- 1995 Review of Jonathan Parry, **Death in Banaras**. **The Book Review**
- 1992 Review of Susan Bayly, **Saints, Goddesses and Kings**. **American Historical Review**
- 1992 Review essay on Gyan Pandey, Veena Das, and Sandria Freitag, "Communalism in Modern India" **IESHR**
- 1992 Review of H.L. Seveviratne, ed., **Identity, Consciousness and the Past**. **Man**
- 1991 "Banaras, City of Moksha". **Seminar**
- 1990 Review of Peter van der Veer, **Gods on Earth**. **American Ethnologist**
- 1990 Review of Dipesh Chakravarty, **Rethinking Working Class History**. **Labor History**
- 1989 Review of R. Frykenberg, ed., **Delhi Through the Ages**. **Journal of Asian Studies**
- 1986 Review of Diana Eck, **Banaras, City of Light**. **Contributions to Indian Sociology**
- 1985 Review of E.R. Gumbert, **A World of Strangers**. **Studies in Comparative International Development**
- 1983 "The Silk Industry of Banaras". Script and commentary for a film produced by Doordarshan, National Indian Television, Delhi
- 1975 on Miscellaneous articles in **The Telegraph** (Calcutta), **The Economic Times** (Bombay), **The Hindustan Times** (Delhi), **The Pioneer** (Delhi and Lucknow), **The Asian Age** (Calcutta and Delhi), and **India Magazine** (Delhi)
- 2010 on Blogs on Education, the East and the West, and Everyday Life at <https://nitakumar.wordpress.com>
- 2016 on Articles in **The Wire**, an online journal, on Education, Literature and the Arts

#### **Grants and awards (selected)**

- 2018 Gould Center, Claremont McKenna College
- 2016 Dean of Faculty, Claremont McKenna College
- 2014 German Historical Institute, London, Summer Fellowship
- 2012, 2010 Berger Institute summer grant
- 2012, 2009 Gould Center summer grant
- 2008 Sir Ratan Tata Fellowship
- 2007 India Foundation for the Arts fellowship
- 2006 Kravis Institute Summer grant
- 2003-2006 Research grant from IDPAD (Indo-Dutch Programme in Alternative Development)
- 2001 American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Fellowship
- 1999-2000 Spencer Foundation Short-term Research grant
- 1999-2000 Netherlands Institute of Advanced Study Fellowship, the Netherlands
- 1998-99 Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship
- 1994-96 Indian Council of Social Science Research Senior Fellowship
1992. British Council Research Grant
- 1990 Wenner Gren Foundation Conference Grant
- 1989-90 American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Fellowship
- 1987-88 Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellowship
- 1988 Ford Foundation Research Grant
1986. American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Fellowship
- 1.84. Mellon Doctoral Fellowship
- 1.82. Social Science Research Council Doctoral Award
- 1981-82 American Institute of Indian Studies Junior Fellowship
- 1.81. Gottschalk Award, University of Chicago
- 1972-73 Lal Bahadur Shastri Fellowship, University of Bridgeport, Conn.

### **Invited lectures and papers (selected)**

- 2018 Lady Sri Ram College, Delhi, India
- 2017 India: Gargi College, Sagar University, NUEPA; USA: NYU, Cornell, Yale
- 2016 AAS, Seattle WA; Liberal Arts in India-3, Pune, India; Deshkal Conference, Delhi
- 2015 Conferences on: Bayly & Banaras, Jnana Pravaha, Varanasi; Liberal Arts in India, Delhi
- 2014 Humboldt University Berlin; SOAS London; Cambridge; Oxford; Indian International Centre, Delhi
- 2013 Centre for Contemporary Studies, Bangalore; JNU, Delhi; Nehru Memorial Library, Delhi; National University of Educational Studies, Delhi
- 2012 Malaviya Centre for Peace Studies, BHU
- 2011 Univ of Pennsylvania; Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi; Trondheim University, Norway
- 2010 University of Wisconsin, Madison; University of Leiden; J. Nehru University, Delhi; India International Centre, Delhi
- 2009 Oxford University, UK
- 2008 Banaras Hindu University, India
- 2007 University of Athens, Greece; Lewis & Clark College; University of Delhi, Jamia Millia
- 2006 University of California Berkeley, University of California Los Angeles, Claremont McKenna College, Pomona College, University of Michigan
- 2005 Universities of Chicago, Heidelberg, Erfurt, Banaras, Michigan State University
- 2004 Columbia University, University of Texas
- 2003 Humanities Institute, University of Michigan; Oberlin College
- 2002 Heidelberg University, Leiden University
- 2001 Banaras Hindu University, Lewis and Clark College, Cambridge University, Brandeis University
- 2000 University of Leiden, Amsterdam, California-Berkeley, London School of Economics
- 1999 Brown University, University of Pennsylvania, Yale University, Oberlin College, University of Chicago, Syracuse University; University of Lisbon
- 1998 Jawaharlal Nehru University, University of Calcutta, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library
- 1997 Delhi University, Tata Institute of Social Sciences
- 1995 Anthropological Association of Finland, University of Helsinki, Tampere University, Roskilde University
- 1994 Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, India International Centre
- 1993.** University of Chicago, University of Washington, Lewis and Clark College
- 1992 University of London, S Asia Colloquium of the Pacific Northwest
- 1991. University of Delhi, Calcutta University
- 1990 School of Oriental and African Studies, Maison des Sciences, Brown University, University of Edinburgh, University of Manchester, London School of Economics & Political Science
- 1989 University of Manchester, Harvard University, University of California Los Angeles, University of Iowa
- 1988. Cornell University, Princeton University, University of North Carolina, India International Centre
- 1986. University of California Berkeley
- 1985 Urban History Association, Amritsar

### **Languages (reading, writing and speaking)**

Excellent Russian, Hindi, and Bengali  
Good Urdu  
Some French, Dutch, Arabic, and Sanskrit

### **Ongoing research projects**

1. I am doing a translation of a dalit novel for Niyogi Books by January 2019.
2. I am writing a ms on the hundred year history of an Indian family from the 1910s to the present, based partly on their memoirs and partly on archival and ethnographic research.

### **Other interests**

I am involved with educational work in India: with teaching adults and children, designing curricula, working with families to untangle the home-school relationship, and teaching children languages and the arts. This is based at NIRMAN, [www.nirman.info](http://www.nirman.info)